Members present: Mayor Dean O’Connor, Altoona
Mayor Drew Merrifield, Carlisle
Council Member John Edwards, Clive
Mayor Frank Cownie, Des Moines
Council Member Chris Coleman, Des Moines
Council Member Tom Cope, Johnston
Mayor Tom Phillips, Norwalk
Council Member Curt Gause, Pleasant Hill
Council Member Robert Sarchet, Polk City
Council Member Russ Trimble, West Des Moines
Council Member Kim Sacker, Van Meter
Mayor Dave Burgess, Windsor Heights

Staff Present: Kandi Reindl-Sullivan, Asst. to the City Manager, Des Moines
                Jeff Lester, Des Moines City Attorney

Guests Present: Andrea Woodard, Greater Des Moines Partnership
                Melissa O’Neil, CISS

Approval of the March 12, 2019 minutes were moved for approval by Drew Merrifield and seconded by Robert Sarchet. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Tom Cope – The 110th day of the session is May 3rd. The biggest issue right now is the property tax reform bill - HSB 165 and it is slated to be debated this morning. The major element of the bill is it place a cap at how much your budgets can grow to 2%. If you want to go above the 2%, the voters can require a referendum to challenge that. The most significant change is to the trust and agency levy to include employee benefits such as IPERS, 411 contributions and health insurance.
Russ Trimble – I think it does have some legs and I think the legislature wants to do something on property tax reform. They had an index and what they found is if they left that, we could've had an increase. That is why they came up with the 2%.

Frank Cownie – Why didn’t they look at the CPI?

Russ Trimble – They looked at people’s income and what they could pay.

Tom Cope – Any city that is trying to have high quality public safety, this bill really puts that at risk. We are going to lose the best firefighters and police officers if we cannot pay a competitive wage.

Chris Coleman – For us to recruit officers, our pay scale has to increase 15-18%. There is no way to hire these professionals with a competitive wage with this bill.

Tom Cope – These are challenging/difficult jobs and we need to pay a competitive wage.

Dean O’Connor – We met with Brian Lohse, and the freshman legislator from Oskaloosa and they said if the State can just grow by 2%, then cities can too. I think it’s a grab at local government.

Tom Cope – There were No votes from the minority party and our objectives is to get 7-10 Republican votes in the House. It is a top priority for Speaker Upmeyer.

Drew Merrifield – To go down to 2%, it’s almost a guarantee that this will go to arbitration on the salaries.

Frank Cownie – How do you educate these legislators? They also held the minimum wage down.

Jeff Lester – Regarding HF 537/SF401, the right of way bill, we were asked to draft an amendment. The latest iteration would take away the city’s ability to recover the cost from the users of the right of way. This would limit your ability to collect a fee only for direct fees and not indirect costs such as construction in the right of way.

Tom Cope - Another bill of interest is SF447 which addresses the amount of rental property that could be in a neighborhood. This really affects college towns since Iowa City and Ames have ordinances in place to limit rental property.
Other bills of interest:

- Fireworks bill is dead.

- Workforce Housing tax credit is still alive and increases the amount of money available - HSB 204/SSB1193. It is incorporated into a couple of different bills.

Drew Merrifield asked about the bill for local control on cell towers.

Tom Cope – I think that bill has passed in both chambers.

Kim Sacker asked for more information on the right of way bill. Tom Cope said this is a bigger impact on the City of Des Moines rather than smaller cities.

Chris Coleman – For the last five years we were in a lawsuit and many cities would now choose the way we are doing it because of our win in the court. It is nice for cities to have alternatives to manage our public infrastructure.

Jeff Lester – There are a number of cities that are doing a study on their rights of way and following our lead.

Frank Cownie – Does the State charge for their right of way?

Jeff Lester – They charge about 5 times more than cities. We are asking for 12 cents and the state charges about $1.45 a lineal foot.

Chris Coleman asked about the gaming bill – sports betting. I would like to see Polk County administer that money.

Tom Cope – This bill would not have any earnings go to Polk County, but there is an effort to carve out 3% to go to local government. Sports betting is a lot more marginal.

Dean O’Connor – It really is to get more people into the casino.

Chris Coleman – I heard that the State revenues would all be put back into the horse industry.

Tom Cope – No that is not accurate, but some money will have to go into the purses for the horse races. The State will get 6-7% of the revenues.
Russ Trimble – This bill just came out of Ways and Means and the Qualified Sponsor Organizations (QSO) will receive some of the money. Some monies will go towards gambling treatments.

LOSST UPDATE

Altoona – Our key to success was the outside group that pushed this out with mailers and meetings. We did informational meetings that were slimly attended.

Pleasant Hill – Four mailers went out, but we had a group that went door knocking to educate our citizens. We are having a bit of a backlash because of the property tax assessments that just came out. We had 85% for property tax relief for public safety.

Des Moines – We passed it last time with 55% and this time it was a little over 70%. We went to a lot of neighborhood meetings and AMOS was instrumental as well. We went to church meetings that were well attended. Groups that weren’t engaged last time were engaged this time. We also sent out mailers and did advertising on the television.

Chris Coleman – The June 30 flood had us include flood prevention in the language. We worked with Wixted & Co. and that was a real asset to our team especially working with the media.

Chris Coleman – The last time we set up a yes for Des Moines Facebook page. And all that was happening were negative posts. This year we purposely did not create a page. We had firefighters respond to negative comments on the Des Moines Register page which took the political response out of it.

West Des Moines – Our campaign game was less than it was before. We did two mailings and this time we had opposition; Americans for Prosperity were fighting us and they had a clever mailing that went out. What was stronger this time was we did a survey on where our citizens want this money to go and they said public safety. We had firefighters and police officers go out and knock on doors encouraging people to vote yes. There was more of a ground game with people talking to one another this time. Levy rate went down from $11.77 to $10.99.

Russ Trimble said the West Des Moines Chamber was very instrumental in the effort. Our message was targeted towards the people who we knew would vote yes for this. We had a lot of people that had no idea the vote was going on despite all of the information that went out.
**Windsor Heights** – We went after two things; property tax rate .69 was knocked off and we threw a whole lot of money into our streets. Our Chamber was very active and held meetings and sent out mailers. Just before the election, there were yellow Yes signs that really helped. We just need to follow through. We also had a weekly email and a monthly newsletter that went out.

Frank Cownie – asked Tom Cope if they were kind of sad they didn’t jump in on this election?

Tom Cope – We are going to have a vote this August and we are working with Urbandale and Grimes on the language.

Frank Cownie – Do you think the new assessments will affect the outcome?

Tom Cope – I think people will have forgotten about that, but they will also realize that they will be going to shop in those cities that have passed the LOSST, but yet their city will not benefit from it. We feel we only have one more opportunity to pass this.

John Edwards – Clive is also looking at placing this on the ballot in August.

**MAC PRIORITIES**

**Workforce Housing**

**Airbnbs/Rental Property Regulations**

Curt Gause – We are still in the process of gathering information to define what is an Airbnb. We are not doing this alone and several cities have ordinances already such as Madison, WI and Kansas City, MO. We want to have the most amount of control over Airbnbs without a lot of work.

Chris Coleman – There are hundreds of Airbnbs you could rent over the metro area. I like to stay in them, but I don’t want one right next door to me.

Russ Trimble – We have an ordinance in place to ban these. It is hard to enforce, but I challenge you to talk to your citizens who live next door to one of these. We had an incident occur and that’s why we took action. We are willing to have discussion to see if there is a better way to go, but it is difficult since those people that own these properties are also property tax payers.
John Edwards talked about the April 15 deadline to approve regulations for Small Wireless Facilities (SWF). The wireless companies this week are saying we do not need to do this but I would still go ahead and meet this deadline.

Polk City and West Des Moines are working on their ordinance for this.

John Edwards also asked how cities are addressing the increase of assessments in your communities.

Tom Cope – A message that the assessments come from Polk County.

Robert Sarchet – Maybe we could work with Gretchen Tegeler on the messaging.

**PARTNERSHIP’S D.C. TRIP**

Andrea Woodard of the Partnership discussed the itinerary and priorities for the trip. (See attached).

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 a.m.